

CENTRAL VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION BOARD

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**NOTICE OF PREPARATION****Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report for the
Sacramento River Bank Protection Project Phase II Supplemental Authority**

January 30, 2009

Introduction

The Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Board) (formerly the Reclamation Board), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District (Corps) are preparing a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Sacramento River Bank Protection Project (SRBPP) Phase II Supplemental Authority (proposed project) for implementation of up to 80,000 linear feet of additional bank protection in the Sacramento River Flood Control Project (SRFCP) area, as authorized by Section 3031 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. The Corps will serve as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Board, as the local project sponsor, will serve as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The SRBPP is a continuing construction project, authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1960, to provide erosion protection for the existing levees and flood control facilities of the SRFCP. The SRFCP consists of approximately 1,300 miles of levees plus overflow weirs, pumping plants, and bypass channels that protects about 2.1 million acres of highly productive agricultural land in Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo, and Yuba counties, as well as the cities of Sacramento, West Sacramento, Yuba City, Marysville, Colusa, Gridley, and other communities in the Sacramento Valley and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Figure 1).

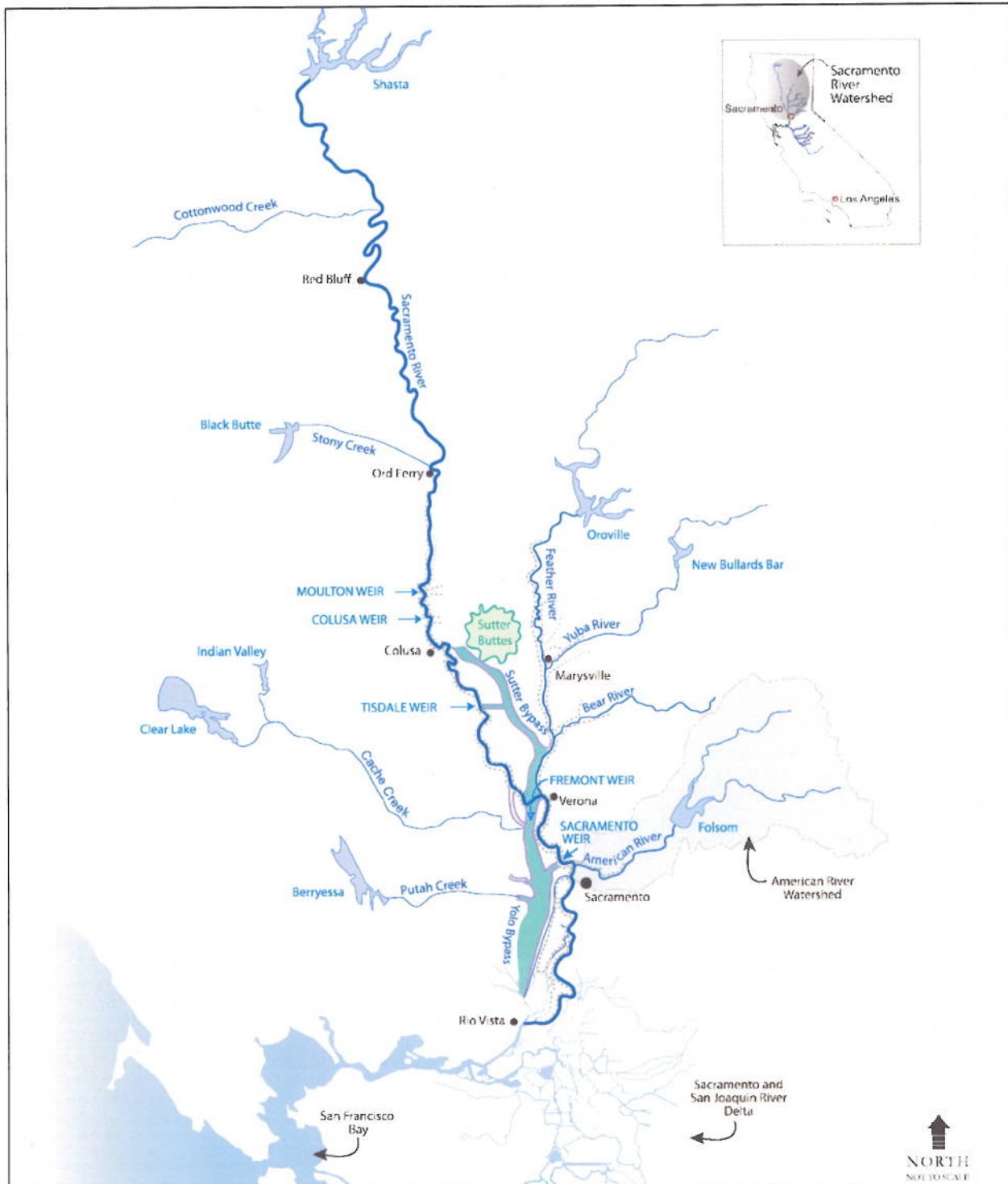


Figure 1. The Sacramento River Bank Protection Project Area

Background

The banks and levees in the Sacramento River watershed have been eroding over time, often resulting in increased flood risk to areas protected by these levees. The SRBPP was originally authorized in 1960 to better manage flood risk by using various engineered methods to protect existing levees and flood control facilities within the SRFCP.

The SRBPP is a long-range program of bank stabilization and erosion control intended to maintain the integrity of the SRFCP. To date, work has been carried out in two phases, with a total of about 820,000 feet of rivers and channels being treated under the project. Current SRBPP work is being carried out under Phase II of its existing federal authorization of 405,000 feet.

The proposed project, construction of the additional 80,000 linear feet of bank protection, was authorized and added to Phase II by Section 3031 of the WRDA of 2007 in order to protect the banks of levees and associated flood risk management infrastructure that is within the SRBPP area from stream erosion. The Corps is responsible for implementation of the SRBPP, including the additional 80,000 linear feet, in conjunction with its non-federal cost-share partner, the Board. Preparation of an EIS/EIR, consistent with Corps engineering regulations for WRDA-NEPA compliance and State regulations will be the vehicle for:

- estimating where bank protection actions will be taken,
- examining alternative methods of bank protection,
- assessing their likely environmental impacts (biophysical and socioeconomic),
- assessing their likely environmental benefits, and
- establishing the framework for determining mitigation for unavoidable significant impacts, including for site-specific future actions.

After decisions for program implementation are made for these items in the final EIS/EIR, individual implementation projects will include further evaluation of site-specific

impacts and mitigation requirements through additional environmental impact analysis, under the decision policy established in the final EIS/EIR.

Purpose

The central reaches of the Sacramento River levees in the SRFCP were established close to streambanks to erode vast sediment deposits accumulated from 1800s hydraulic mining in the Sierra Nevada and to facilitate use of rich floodplain soils for agriculture. This sediment-removal purpose was met by about 1940, but the rivers, deprived of the natural energy dissipation of floodplains, have continued to erode laterally, often undermining the toe of adjacent levees. This ongoing problem has two potential solutions: setback of levees to reduce flood flow depths and velocities and thus erosion of natural banks, or armoring existing or restored streambanks to resist the erosion. The project purpose and objective is to arrest or avoid streambank erosion that threatens the integrity of the SRFCP levee system.

Study Area

The planning area for the SRBPP Phase II Supplemental Authority is considered to be the entire SRFCP area. The Corps' current inventory of critical eroding sites will constitute a representative sample of the sites to eventually be treated. As streambank erosion is episodic and new critical sites can appear each year, the environmental analysis will be programmatic in nature allowing for future environmental impact analysis for specific projects, as needed.

Project Alternatives

The EIS/EIR will address the No Action alternative and five action alternatives including four different types of bank protection alternatives and a levee setback alternative. The four types of bank protection alternatives differ from one another in the amount and extent of rock protection placed and the environmental features (e.g., vegetation and instream woody material) incorporated in the design.

The EIR will describe the direct and indirect significant environmental effects of the proposed project improvements within the study area at a programmatic level.

The EIR will also evaluate cumulative effects of the proposed flood control improvements when considered in conjunction with other related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, including other Corps, Board, and California Department of Water Resources projects.

On the basis of preliminary evaluation, the Board has determined that the proposed alternatives that will be evaluated in the EIR could have the following significant environmental effects:

- **Agricultural Resources:** Conversion of prime or important farmland to nonagricultural uses.
- **Air Quality:** Temporary increases in pollutant emissions associated with construction activities.
- **Cultural Resources:** Disturbance of unknown historic or archaeological resources during construction.
- **Fisheries and Aquatic Resources:** Construction effects on special-status fish species or their habitats; modification of habitat at erosion treatment sites.
- **Hazardous Materials:** Potential introduction of contaminants into water courses as a result of construction activities.
- **Noise:** Temporary increases in noise levels near sensitive receptors during construction.
- **Recreation:** Disturbance of recreational activities in areas adjacent to construction.
- **Terrestrial Biological Resources:** Disturbance or loss of riparian vegetation, jurisdictional wetlands, or other sensitive natural communities or special-status species habitats; construction disturbance or take of special-status terrestrial species.
- **Transportation and Circulation:** Temporary disruption of traffic circulation during construction.

- **Visual Resources:** Temporary and long-term changes in scenic views or visual character of project sites.
- **Water Resources:** Temporary effects on water quality during construction.

Mitigation measures will be proposed for all potentially significant impacts identified in the EIS/EIR. Beneficial effects may also result from the proposed action and alternatives, and will also be identified in the EIS/EIR.

Scoping and Public Involvement Process

A series of public scoping meetings will be held in February 2009. The purpose of the scoping meetings is to present information about the proposed project and the Corps and Board's decision-making processes, and to listen to the views of the public on the range of issues relevant to the scope and content of the EIS/EIR. The scoping meeting dates, times, and locations are as follows:

Colusa

Tuesday, February 17, 2009
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Colusa Fairgrounds, Atwood Hall
1303 10th Street

Walnut Grove

Wednesday, February 18, 2009
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Jean Harvie Community and Senior Center
14273 River Road

Sacramento

Tuesday, February 24, 2009
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
Library Galleria
828 "I" Street

Chico

Wednesday, February 25, 2009
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Chico Masonic Family Center
110 West East Avenue

Written Comments

Written comments and suggestions concerning the proposed project and the EIS/EIR may be submitted to Kip Young, Department of Water Resources, Division of Flood Management, Levee Repairs Branch, 2858 Watt Avenue, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95821-9000, by e-mail at kyoung@water.ca.gov, by fax at (916) 574-1480, by telephone (916) 574-1437, no later than **March 16, 2009**. Comments may also be provided at the public scoping meetings.

The draft EIS/EIR is scheduled to be available for public review and comment in October 2010.

1/28/09
Date

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Central Valley Flood Protection Project
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